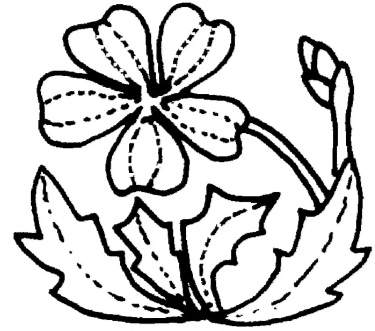


*The*

*Ballarat*

*Naturalist*

*November 2005*



Trailing Goodenia  
*Goodenia lanata*  
(Club Logo)

### **Stella Bedggood Public Lecture, 7 October, 2005 “Otway Dreaming”**

Speaker: Trevor Pescott

Months ago Trevor Pescott from Geelong Field Naturalists was asked to speak at our annual evening which remembers and honours the work of Stella Bedggood, an early member of our club. Trevor chose his subject and titled it “Otway Dreaming”. As he spoke, his title choice became clear. He dreams of safe, permanently preserved Otway Ranges. However, he does not just dream. Clearly he has worked hard, with others, for decades to safeguard such a special area. Over time Trevor has written books, numerous articles, newspaper features and papers and has also taken magnificent photos.



Trevor showed maps including: historical, land use, fire, timber harvesting, and topography, even satellite ones to help us learn about the Otways. He spoke of the Wathaurong aboriginal occupation and use of the land, and showed slides of some visible remnants such as middens and grinding stones. He mentioned sealers and whalers, the 1798 discovery of Bass Strait, and the naming of the area by Lieutenant Grant to honour his friend William Albany Otway. He spoke about William Buckley’s 33 years living with the aborigines, the building of Cape Otway lighthouse, the production of thousands of local blue gum railway sleepers, land clearing for farming, conflict between farmers and

and timber getters, an 1886 Royal Commission resulting in about 63,000 hectares permanently reserved for timber production and then, of continued land use and abuse.

Much of the land cleared proved unsuitable for farming and was abandoned. By 1958 there were about thirty small sawmills – also unsustainable. Up until the 1960's no attempts were made to regenerate the vegetation. We were shown some distressing slides of clear-felled mountain slopes – every tree cut or poisoned. Then a practice of leaving scattered “habitat” trees was tried – useless to small animals.



Through all this land exploitation the Otway “dreamers” were active. Individuals fought battles against companies, and groups agitated for national parks - one such park as early as 1914 in a plea to protect King Parrot habitat). The Land Conservation Council was formed to review public lands and determine needs, OREN – the Otway Ranges Environment Network began to be active with blockades and protests about wasteful wood chipping of old growth forests attracted support and via other means. Political battles continued on and still the “dreamers” sought protection. By the late 1970's small parks began to be declared, such as Angahook, Lorne, and Carlisle, but they were small and scattered. Some areas “protected” were useless for other purposes anyway.

People like Trevor didn't give up. Eventually on 15 September 2005 at 4pm legislation created the Greater Otway National Park of 102,000 hectares adjacent to a 40,000 hectare Otway Forest Park. Victory! One logging contract still has until 2008 to finish up.

Trevor then showed us beautiful glimpses of why it has been his lifelong dream to save the Otways forever from more harm and to preserve what remains. We saw slides of pristine streams, waterfalls, trees, bushes, flowers, orchids, grasses, ferns, mosses, fungi, butterflies, insects, glow-worms, and snails. Other pictures included the endemic carnivorous black snail, spiders, shrimps, snakes, skinks, lizards, platypus, echidnas, Spot-tailed Quoll (very rare now), marsupials, birds and frogs. We learned that he is pessimistic about permanent survival of some species, especially those dependent on hollows, such as the Gang Gang cockatoo and he is also concerned about possible outcomes of widespread Tasmanian blue gum plantings. For some decades pine plantations have been widely planted, resulting in considerable increased Black-tailed cockatoo populations.

We can rest assured that Trevor Pescott will retain his passionate interest in the Otways. We congratulate him for all the time and effort he has devoted to such good effect for so many years.

Claire Dalman

## Excursion to Enfield State Park, Sun. 9 October 2005

Leaders: Pat and Bill Murphy

When we entered the eastern section of Enfield State Park we were impressed with the colorful patches of Golden Bush-pea *Pultenea gunnii*. Our first stop was near large patches of flowering bird orchids. Common Bird Orchid *Chiloglottis valida*, Dainty Bird Orchid *C. trapeziformis* and the hybrid Bronze Bird Orchid *C. x pescottiana* were all flowering. Another orchid flowering was Nodding Greenhood *Pterostylis nutans*. Thin-leaf or Snake Wattle *Acacia aculeatissima*, with its phyllodes pointing in all directions, crept across the ground. Honeypots *Acrotiche serrulata* had small flowers hidden along the stems and a few immature berries. A Grey Shrike-thrush was heard calling.

Along Misery Creek Road the Enfield Grevillea *Grevillea bedggoodianna* was in full bloom and cascading over the roadside cutting. A yellow and orange background was provided by Hedge Wattle *Acacia paradoxa* and Narrow-leaf Bitter-pea *Daviesia leptophylla*. Sharp eyes found one Wax-lip Orchid *Glossodia major*.

The southern section of the park has recovered well, 10 years after the 1995 fires. The canopy consisted of Brown and Red Stringybark with Narrow-leaf and Broad-leaved Peppermint (*Eucalyptus baxteri*, *macrorhyncha*, *radiata* and *dives*). Most of the Myrtle Wattle *Acacia myrtifolia* have died off and Love Creeper *Comesperma volubile* with soft blue flowers climbed through the dead stems. Many plants were flowering. Close to the ground were Pink Bells *Tetralochea ciliata*, Creamy Candles *Stackhousia monogyna*, Running Postman *Kennedia prostrata*, Common Flat-pea *Platylobium obtusangulum*, and Curly Everlasting *Helichrysum scorpioides*. Leaves of several orchids were found together with one Brown-clubbed Spider-orchid *Arachnorchis* (*Caladenia*) *phaeoclavia* in the advanced-bud stage.

During lunch at Surface Point White-naped and White-eared honeyeaters were flying around the trees in the picnic area. Rustyhood orchids *Pterostylis rufa* were growing on the clay soil which remained after the topsoil had been removed during gold mining. A Rufous Fantail was heard and then seen. Prickly Moses *Acacia verticillata* lined the gully in yellow colour. Austral Indigo *Indigofera australis* and Common Maidenhair *Adiantum aethiopicum* were growing along the creek.

At Beacon Hill trailing Goodenia *Goodenia lanata* (Field Naturalists' Club of Ballarat club emblem) was flowering (see P.1). Prickly and Silky Teatree *Leptospermum continentale* and *myrsinoides*, growing along drainage lines were beginning to flower. Small plants in flower were Twining Fringe Lily *Thysanotus pattersonii* and Ivy-leaf Violet *Viola hederacea*.

Thanks to Pat and Bill Murphy for leading an interesting excursion to look at the floral highlight in Enfield State Park.

John Gregurke

*Any ideas for next year's syllabus will be now gratefully received by the Committee.*

## Calendar

### November

Fri. 4        *Grevilleas*, by Gareth Holmes, Post grad. student, Melb. Uni.

Sun. 6 Excursion -*Mt. Beckworth*. Leader: Helen Burgess, Club member

Tues. 22     Committee meeting at Carol Hall's.

### December

Fri. 2        *Freshwater Biology* by Alison Pouliot, Biologist

Sun. 4        Excursion –*Corindhap / Rokewood area*. Leader: Greg Binns

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Supper duty:        December:     Volunteers needed

Note-taker:        Nov. & Dec.     Volunteers needed

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## Committee

**President**     Mr. Peter Dalman

**Vice-Pres.**     Mr. Greg Binns

**Secretary**     Mrs. Carol Hall

**Treasurer**     Mr. Les Hanrahan

Miss Helen Burgess

Miss Maureen Christie

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Ms Fran Hanrahan (Editor)

Mrs. Pat Murphy

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### Email:

**Website:** [www.ballarat.yourguide.com.au](http://www.ballarat.yourguide.com.au) Click on *Local Info*. Search *Environment*.

**Meetings** are held at the Ballarat Horticultural Centre, cnr. Gregory & Gillies Sts (VicRoads 254 F8) on the first Friday of the month at 7.30pm.

**Excursions:** Depart from Ballarat Market Place (formerly Creswick Plaza) Creswick Rd., Ballarat (VicRoads 255 M10) at 9.30 am unless otherwise specified.

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## Birds on a Mount Helen Block

August 1976 to present day

### Original habitat

Mature native trees, e.g., Peppermints, Blackwood, Ironbark, Stringybark, Tasmanian Blue Gum and Grevillea robusta and a solitary ailing Banksia. A range of non-native trees, e.g. Willow, Oak, Pinus Silver Birch, Sycamore, Prunus sp., Coloneaster

### Present habitat

A wide range of Grevilleas, Hakeas, Correas, Banksias, Acacias and other natives. All the non-natives except the silver birch and a Coloneaster (enjoyed by the Crimson Rosellas) have gone.

Bird species total: 61 (all but Welcome Swallow have set foot in the block.

Exotic: 5

Escapees: 2 (no included in the total)

Nesting species: 5

Water birds & waterfowl : 2 -White-faced heron, Wood duck (both have nested over the road)

Birds of prey: 1 -Brown Goshawk(roosted at least twice, prey included

Crimson Rosella

Pigeons and doves: 2 -Common Bronzewing -a fairly frequent visitor, Spotted Tumble Dove – some numbers three years ago.

Parrot family: 9 -Cockatoos (4), lorikeets (3), Parrots (2)

Cockatoos: Yellow Tailed-Black, Long Billed Corella, Galah,

Gang Gang

### Highlights

Three yellow Tailed Black landed in the Stringybark and next day three came and stripped the Hakeas of their seeds. Their only visit. Were they the same birds?

Gang Gangs. I saw up to 21 move up and down Shire Avenue from February to September in 1984. Stripped an Eucalyptus leucostylon of all its flowers – floral carpet!

Rosellas. Crimson Rosellas and a pair of Eastern Rosellas nested in the six bird boxes I had. The Crimson Rosella pair were always a combination of adult male and immature female.

Cockatoos. 4 – Pallid, Fantail and two bronze Cockatoos – none in recent years ? affected by Pied Currawongs nest-plundering.

BHL



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